

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Ashe and White Bluffs Radio Antenna Replacements

Project Manager: Robert Trisman—TEP-CSB-1

Location: Benton County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace and upgrade the existing Ultra-High Frequency (UHF) radio antennas on the radio towers located at the White Bluffs Substation and Ashe Substation. The new antennas would generally be similar in height and size as the existing antennas. In addition, some equipment at the White Bluffs Substation would be upgraded, including the Sequential Events Recorder (SER)/Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), 48 VDC batteries, battery chargers, Dial Automatic Telephone Switching (DATS) phone, BPA data communications Information Resources (IR) circuit, Network Management System Remote Terminal Unit (NMS RTU), and access server and Field Intra-Net (FIN).

All work would occur within the existing fenced substation areas.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Motus Recruiting & Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 30, 2017

Attachment: Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Ashe and White Bluffs Radio Antenna Replacements

Project Site Description

The project location is in Benton County, Washington at the Ashe and White Bluffs substations. The Ashe Substation is located in Township 12 North, Range 28 East, Section 32, and the White Bluffs Substation is in Township 10 North, Range 28 East, Section 27. The sites are located on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, just north of Richland, Washington.

The radio towers are located within fenced substations on grounds that are covered with rock. There is no vegetation at either location.

A review of the National Wetland Inventory, topography and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or water bodies at the sites.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA's cultural staff determined that the project would have no potential to affect historical or cultural resources. The project would not involve any ground disturbance, and the replacement antennas would not significantly change the existing view shed.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project would not involve ground disturbing activities.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status plant species present within the project areas. The project areas are devoid of vegetation.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status wildlife species present within the project areas. The project areas are fenced and do not provide good habitat.		
In the unlikely event that a nest is built on one of the radio towers, prior to construction, then timing restrictions would apply to avoid disturbing nestlings. The towers were inspected for nests in June of 2016 and none were noted at that time.		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains or fish present within the project areas.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands present within the project areas.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not involve ground-disturbing activities.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: The project would not involve any land use changes. All work would occur at existing facilities.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The antenna replacements would not alter the visual quality of the landscape.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary noise may occur during the antenna removal and installation, but the impact would be non-significant.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impact to human health or safety.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary: The removed batteries would be sent to BPA's Ross facility for appropriate disposal of hazardous materials.

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project is occurring at BPA facilities; BPA is coordinating with Department of Energy (DOE) staff at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation (the surrounding landowner). DOE staff has determined that the proposed action is covered under BPA's existing permit.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Recruiting & Staffing

Date: January 30, 2017